

SB 129

To Members of the Public Health Committee,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the families and guardians of the Southbury Training School (STS) to urge your support for our proposal to amend Senate Bill 129, which is currently before your committee, with language to reopen STS to new admissions.

We believe that STS is a crucial part of Connecticut's system of care for the intellectually and developmentally disabled, and that reopening the doors at STS will both revitalize the facility and benefit many more people in the surrounding community.

STS is a state-run Intermediate Care Facility that meets strict federal standards. In addition to providing comprehensive services to the people who live there, STS provides dental and other services to more than 500 community-based clients of the Department of Developmental Services.

As a result of both a court order and a bill passed by the Connecticut Legislature, without the input of STS families or guardians, new admissions to STS have been blocked since the 1980s. As a result, the fixed costs of operating STS have been spread since the 1980s over a steadily shrinking base of residents, and the cost of care per resident has steadily risen. This has periodically fueled an argument from opponents of the facility that it should be closed.

We believe that allowing new admissions to STS would accomplish the following:

- New admissions would result in a lowered cost of care per resident at the facility and help make it financially viable.
- New admissions would shorten or possibly eliminate a growing waiting list for residential care and services for intellectually disabled people throughout the state.
- New admissions would allow STS to continue and possibly expand its role as a resource for dental and medical care for community-based clients of DDS.

Thank-you.

Diana G. Mennone